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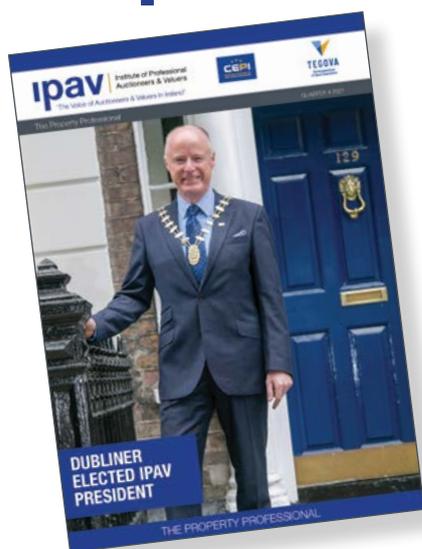


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Photo: Brian Dempsey

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## MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear Member

Welcome to the Q4 edition of the Property Professional magazine. Irish society having finally opened up and returned to relative normality earlier this summer, now unfortunately we face into Christmas restrictions once again due to the rising incidence of Covid-19.

Given the very high rate of vaccination in the Republic, it is not at all clear why there has been such an alarming increase in numbers in recent weeks. One cause is certainly the arrival of winter and the increasing amount of socialising alongside the opening up of sporting events and late-night venues. Let's hope that the restrictions are of a minor nature and that the economy will not be too badly impacted.

For estate agents, auctioneers and valuers, the year 2021 proved a very good one for most and after the decrease in activity caused by the pandemic, the market became very active during the summer months. Recent surveys such as that from the Central Statistics Office have borne witness to the rise in prices right across the country. Property prices in rural towns and villages had been very suppressed since the recession of 2007 – 2011 and it was good news that they are now back to realistic levels as more and more people opt to live in the countryside. Properties in coastal areas are now particularly buoyant.

The Institute itself has had a very busy year and many of the activities have been reported in the pages of the previous issues of the Property Professional. In this issue we feature reports and some photographs from our recent very successful Valuation Conference run in conjunction with TEGoVA and from our restricted AGM which saw a new President, Dubliner Paul McCartney elected. I wish to congratulate Paul on his election, also our new senior and junior vice presidents, Gerry Coffey and Joanne Lavelle as well as the four new members of National Council. This is a very significant development for IPAV and I wish all of them well on Council and look forward to even more women coming on board in the coming years.

I wish to congratulate and thank Marc MacSharry TD on getting our SELLER'S LEGAL PACK FOR PROPERTY BUYERS BILL 2021 to the first reading on November 23rd. This was a most memorable day for all IPAV members and indeed all consumers and I have no doubt it will lead the way to shorter conveyancing times.

There is also a report on the first meeting of the new IPAV-driven cross-party Oireachtas Committee which will help to inform members of the Oireachtas on the latest developments in the property industry.

Our regular contributors Donal Buckley, Mike Brady, Tommy Barker and Frank Quinn all have interesting articles and I wish to thank them for their continued support. In our feature on IPAV members, we profile two very successful agents Ailish Wall and Siobhán Tuckey who run a thriving agency in the village of Stamullen on the Dublin/ Meath border. Many members will know Ailish who has been a stalwart supporter of IPAV events over the years as well as our Young Professionals Network. We wish them both the best in the future.

As this is the last magazine of 2021, I wish to thank all members for their support during the year and to wish one and all a Very Happy Christmas and a Prosperous 2022.

Best wishes

Pat Davitt

CEO

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*“..However, rents are still too high for many, notably students and those who wish to return from abroad. If this crisis is not eased soon, it will have a very negative effect on Ireland’s economic growth and prosperity in the longer term”*

Dear Member

I was both delighted and privileged to be elected IPAV President at the Institute’s AGM which took place on September 25th last. While the meeting was restricted in numbers, it was great to be able to meet and greet fellow members after such a long period of remote communication. The evening BBQ was also a great opportunity for members to relax and to chat with one another once again, which is very much part of IPAV’s ethos.

Being elected IPAV President is a particular honour for me and my family as my father Michael, who is still hale and hearty, was a member of IPAV’s Council for many years and there is a long family tradition of association with the Institute.

With society now learning to live with Covid-19 and at the same time returning to relatively normal day-to-day living, estate agents have been very busy dealing with the pent-up demand from the public and the late summer/autumn period has been a very busy time for most. While the Government’s publication Housing for All promises a huge boost in housing output - and there are signs across many towns and cities of a building boom - it will nevertheless take some time for supply to meet demand. Budget 2022 contained some welcome measures but, in IPAV’s view, did not go far enough in making housing, particularly second-hand homes, available to first-time buyers.

The rental sector continues to be overheated, with the working from home routine for many easing the crisis somewhat. However, rents are still too high for many, notably students and those who wish to return from abroad. If this crisis is not eased soon, it will have a very negative effect on Ireland’s economic growth and prosperity in the longer term.

Meanwhile, the Institute itself is very busy with many activities in the run-up to the Christmas period. The 7th Valuation Conference, held in association with TEGoVA and again virtually this year, was a major success and I wish to thank all those involved in organising it and the speakers for a job well done. IPAV’s annual Lettings Day was held on November 20th and again provided very useful up-to-date information from a variety of speakers. This year IPAV also continued to deliver CPD courses on behalf of the Property Services Regulatory Authority and all members should have their required hours completed now or very close to it. I also wish to congratulate the new graduates from TU Dublin and wish them every success in their future careers.

As members are aware, this year has been a special one for IPAV as we celebrate our 50th anniversary, unfortunately we had to restrict many of our celebrations including the two President’s Lunches which have been rescheduled to March 2022. The past two years have been tough for everybody, including estate agents and as we now begin to look forward to 2022, let’s hope for a return to normality where we can all pursue our daily lives with the minimum of restrictions.

I wish you all a very Happy and Peaceful Christmas.

Best wishes

*Paul McCartney*  
President

**We agents, have no power**

**So don't tell us that**

**We can dream of a fair property portal**

**Because when it's all said and done**

**It's too late to be saved from  
portal prices and loss of control**

**And we refuse to believe**

**We need to demand a brighter future**

**Because we don't have a choice\***

**Property Professionals:**  
It's time to change your perspective.

\* Read this again from bottom to top





## SELLER’S LEGAL PACK – IPAV WELCOMES DEPUTY MARC MACSHARRY TO DRIVE LEGISLATIVE EFFORT

BY PAT DAVITT, CEO, IPAV

As Members will be aware, IPAV has drafted a seminal piece of legislation in the Seller’s Legal Pack Bill 2021. We are delighted that with the assistance of Dáil Deputy Marc MacSharry, the Bill got its first reading in the House on Tuesday, November 23rd. This is great news for members as, if implemented, would drastically shorten conveyancing times for everybody.

The Bill, as envisioned by IPAV, will codify in law a requirement that certain key documents be prepared by the seller of a property in advance of it being put on the open market for sale. Our industry experience means we know that the current situation creates significant but unnecessary conveyancing delays. This initiative thus promises to ensure a flow of properties onto the market, at a time when that market is facing extraordinary pressure.

In IPAV’s pursuit of seeing the Seller’s Legal Pack enshrined in law, we have been working, to date with Deputy Seán Canney on this important project. Our work with Deputy Canney has allowed us to understand his position on the Bill from both a policy and political perspective, and to gain a fulsome and nuanced picture of the road ahead for the Seller’s Legal Pack. As a result of this engagement, we are confident that we have a strong legislative proposal that will, in time, withstand scrutiny and deliver lasting tangible benefits to buyers, sellers and property service providers.



*Pictured outside Leinster House were IPAV President Paul McCourtney and CEO Pat Davitt with Deputy MacSharry*

Deputy MacSharry has first-hand experience of the challenges being faced by all parties to a property transaction - consumers, buyers, sellers, members and all PSPs - and the inordinate delays being wrought on them by virtue of the length of time it is taking to convey a property. He knows that a smooth functioning marketplace is one of the pillars of the broader solution to the housing crisis affecting people across the country. As a fellow auctioneer, Deputy MacSharry knows instinctively the problems affecting our industry and that pragmatic, common-sense solutions such as the Seller’s Legal Pack will be of benefit to all parties. With two decades of legislative experience in the Oireachtas he understands how to navigate the systems and procedures.

### Deputy Marc MacSharry

In the interest of progressing this Bill further, IPAV has decided to enlist the assistance of fellow auctioneer and honorary member of IPAV, Deputy Marc MacSharry, in order to see this initiative advance in Dáil Eireann. IPAV would like to extend its thanks to Deputy Canney for his work on the Bill to date. The preparatory work that he carried out with us has been invaluable and we are enormously grateful to Deputy Canney and his team for their efforts in acquainting themselves with the initiative and the time they spent with us on the Seller’s Legal Pack Bill as a piece of legislation that we can proudly bring forward.



*Deputy MacSharry.*

Having taken the time to undertake scrupulous preparatory work, we are ready to advance our objectives and deliver this simple yet effective change in the way property sales are conducted. IPAV looks forward to updating Members on the Bill’s passage through the two chambers in the Oireachtas. In the meantime, Deputy MacSharry’s work in the Oireachtas will be complemented with our own outreach to Members of the Dail and Seanad, not least those who have joined us on the Informal Oireachtas Committee on Property Market Reform. At IPAV we remain committed as ever to developing similar pragmatic, common sense solutions to the problems facing our members and consumers on the property market today.



## GOVERNMENT BILL TO PUT 2% CAP ON RENT INCREASES IN RENT PRESSURE ZONES

BY TIM RYAN

The Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage, Darragh O'Brien TD, has published yet another piece of tenancy legislation, the Residential Tenancies (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2021. The legislation will cap rent increases at 2% per annum in Rent Pressure Zones (RPZs). This new cap will only operate when general inflation is higher than 2%.

The Bill also provides for tenancies of unlimited duration, a key reform committed to under Housing for All, the Government's recently published plan to create a sustainable housing system in Ireland. The Bill will be progressed to enactment as a matter of priority. The rent increase cap will apply immediately upon enactment.

The previous cap of 4% on annual rent increases was replaced on 16 July 2021, with rent increases in RPZs currently prohibited from exceeding general inflation as recorded in the Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP). The aim was to bring about far lower rent increases for the estimated 74% of all tenancies which are in RPZs. HICP averaged 0.73% over the three years to July 2021. Given the unexpectedly fast rise in inflation, a rent increase cap of 2% per annum will apply under this Bill when the HICP inflation rate is higher.

Commenting Minister O'Brien said, "When introducing the legislation to link any rent increases to HICP inflation in July, I was very clear on the need to carefully monitor inflation. At that time, HICP inflation averaged 0.73% per annum over the previous three years but had risen to 1.6% per annum in the year ending June 2021.

"Given the unexpectedly fast rise in HICP inflation, I quickly moved to engage with the office of the Attorney General and secured Government approval to introduce a 2% cap on rent increases in RPZs. This Bill respects the constitutionally protected property rights of landlords and aims to safeguard continued investment in the sector by existing and new landlords to deliver the requisite supply of high-quality rental accommodation.

"In addition to significantly reducing the level of rent increases in RPZs, the Bill also addresses long-term security of tenure



by introducing tenancies of unlimited duration. This is a key commitment in Housing for All, our new housing Plan for Ireland.

"The early publication of this Bill and the clear focus on its early enactment demonstrates the Government's strong commitment to improving the situation for renters in Ireland. We are making strides in this regard. Affordability is one of the key challenges in the rental market and tackling this is one of the central plinths of Housing for All. This Bill will help and I look forward to debating the Bill this week in the Oireachtas. We now have tenants in situ in our first cost rental homes, availing of rents which are up to 50% below the open market rate.

"Applications for other schemes have recently closed and from seeing the volume of applications, we know that we need to significantly scale up cost rental accommodation in Ireland. Housing for All sets us on a path to delivering 18,000 cost rental homes between now and 2030 – an ambitious but achievable target," he concluded.

The legislation proposes to provide enhanced tenancy protection by making a 'Part 4' tenancy one of unlimited duration after a tenant has been in place for six months and not subject to expiry at the end of a six-year term (at the discretion of the landlord).

It is intended that this would apply to new tenancies commencing six months or more after enactment of this Bill. In addition, where any existing tenancy is renewed after this time, it will become a tenancy of unlimited duration.

## RTB MOVES TO NEW ONLINE ACCOUNT AND REGISTRATION PORTAL



The RTB has moved to a new online account and registration portal, for landlords and agents, with a new webform for submitting dispute resolution applications. For the latest information, please read the latest customer announcement on the RTB website [www.rtb.ie](http://www.rtb.ie).

As part of this changeover, the current online registration and dispute resolution application portal closed from 4th of November and the new portal re-opened on the 15th of November.

Additionally, the current RTB dispute resolution portal was replaced with a new, easy to use webform from the 5th of November.

For the latest information, please read the latest customer announcement on the RTB website [www.rtb.ie](http://www.rtb.ie).



# ARE POLITICIANS ENDANGERING RATHER THAN HELPING RENTAL SUPPLY?

BY DONAL BUCKLEY

Knee jerk reactions of politicians to events and multi-million euro residential deals are in danger of damaging the supply of housing which in turn will only serve to further annoy renters and the electorate, frustrated with the shortage of accommodation and high rents.

This was illustrated by the reaction of a Dublin city councillor to the decision of a developer to sell The Jam factory site in Coolock with a €25m price tag after securing its rezoning from industrial to residential and securing planning permission for 471 apartments. While it would have been understandable if the independent councillor had urged the Government to increase Capital Gains Tax, instead he proposed that the site should be dezoned. That would only have the effect of further curtailing supply of housing.

But independent councillors are not the only ones whose comments could damage the supply of residential accommodation.

Government rent controls, as well as Government plans to reduce the number of leasing deals with institutional investors could also curtail supply. The Government needs to show more recognition that if it were not for the willingness of international and Irish investors to buy these apartment blocks, Irish developers would not have bounced back from the financial crash and new Irish developers would not have entered the market.

Such investors benefit not only the supply of private rental property but also social rental property. Indeed, it is the Government's willingness to fund purchases by both approved housing bodies and local authorities that provide developers with the comfort that should international investors not buy their private projects, then they can sell them for social housing.

## Goodbody Report

In a recent report, Goodbody stockbroking analyst Colm Lauder pointed out that it is a growing concern for the PRS sector, and indeed general housing supply, to see Ireland, at a national Government level, moving in a similar direction to the left-wing trends on housing as seen in some European countries.

"The Irish political environment remains highly polarised on housing, with growing populist efforts, aping similar policy moves in left-controlled cities like Berlin (SPD/Die Linke/Grüne) and Barcelona (BeC/PSCPSOE), to introduce more stringent rent control measures, or indeed regulatory blocks against investors, without consideration for the impact such moves would have on much needed supply," he added.

He goes on to say "Increased political interference will likely stymie supply, which may further exacerbate market rental levels. International precedent has shown that severe rent controls, such as a rent freeze, lead to a sharp decline in supply and quality



of rental stock. We consider that Irish residential yields can go marginally lower, but a risk premium for Ireland is necessary to remain to reflect heightened risk of political interference in the sector."

He also refers to Sinn Fein's policies on the Irish property sector. These include:

A three-year rent freeze on all residential tenancies; CPI link to rents after three-year freeze; €1,500 tax credit for all tenancies; the creation of tenancies of indefinite duration; the removal of S34 of the Residential Tenancies Act (Grounds for Termination); an increased dividend withholding tax from 25% to 33%; 33% CGT on all property disposals and the application of full rate of commercial Stamp Duty on REITs.

The party also proposes to introduce legislation to end the tax advantages and exemptions granted by the Government to institutional investors, a Stamp Duty surcharge on the purchase of residential property by institutional investors, and amendments to the Planning and Development Act 2000, introducing tenure type and mix as a matter of consideration in all future planning applications and approvals.

## Cambridge Study

Lauder cites a study by the Cambridge University Centre for Housing and Planning Research which surveyed PRS/BTR investors in 2015 to assess how they would react should rent controls be introduced in the UK.

It showed that in the event of a three-year rent freeze being introduced, 57% of landlords would look to reduce their exposure or dispose of their investments in the sector; 35% noted they would "continue as before" and 8% said they would be willing to take a loss on lettings.

Lauder says that a similar scenario in Ireland, could be exacerbated by the fact that many smaller landlords are already leaving the market due to high costs, mostly taxation. Despite his concerns about recent Government measures, nevertheless

Lauder takes encouragement from the Government's flagship Housing for All policy as it is "overwhelmingly supply oriented".

It sets out how it intends to increase supply to 300,000 units over the next nine years, a doubling of output compared to the past nine. The plan sets out how it believes this can be achieved through a combination of incentives for home ownership, policies to mobilise the use of land for residential construction and a very large increase in the public building programme.

The implementation of this policy document will be a key test for the current Government and Lauder believes that failure would likely see the political landscape shift further leftwards presenting increased risks for investor capital allocations to Ireland, and investment performance in Ireland more generally.

"The plan is not short on ambition or funding but will require both an increase in the institutional capacity of the Government to deliver and enhanced cooperation with the private sector if it is to succeed. Labour shortages also pose a risk to its success over the coming years.

"Specifically, on the institutional investment in the PRS sector, the language surrounding international investors in the Government's plan is generally more positive than that seen in the media and political commentary in recent months. This could, overall, be seen as encouraging given the acknowledgement of the important role that international capital plays in increasing supply."

Another key takeaway was the Government's commitment to engaging with international investors, a role that was previously conducted through intermediaries. "The Department of Finance will lead communication and engagement with institutional investors", including the hosting of "tradeshows events". Here, the Department of Finance "will communicate policies and encourage appropriate investment in residential accommodation in Ireland". The above shows the Government's commitment to building a relationship with international investors and their focus on marketing Ireland as an attractive place for residential investment.

Overall, there is a broad acknowledgement that international capital is critical to support increases in supply, especially with a constrained domestic banking environment.

He says that the Government has clearly laid out its intent to reduce rents through an increase in supply and he also notes some additional measures aimed at the protection of renters which will see rent increases limited to the cost of living. The Government has also committed to examining the issue surrounding deposit retention, the second most common reason for disputes, through "the creation of a system of deposit retention based on best international practice". Finally, an area of interest was the announcement of the introduction of "tenancies of indefinite duration", in an effort to protect renters.

He believes that longer leases will likely be welcomed by institutional investors given the experience in the more developed UK market which shows a proven case for longer occupancy at professionally managed residential schemes.

He says investment in the sector is highly internationalised, and therefore Dublin is competing on a value angle, and thus far it has remained attractive versus most European markets. Certainly, Dublin is not as attractively priced as when the sector began to become institutionalised from 2012 onwards when net yields were north of 6%, however pricing across peer markets has moved similarly, and we see prime PRS product in Dublin still offering a considerable return premium despite more constrained growth assumptions.

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# THERE IS NO STRENGTH WITHOUT UNITY AMONGST FARMERS

BY MICHAEL BRADY



*Ní neart go cur le chéile* (there is no strength without unity) is an old Irish saying.

At present, the negativity projected at farmers and landowners, primarily in respect of environmental matters, appears to be never ending. Greenhouse gases, water quality, biodiversity and animal welfare are the measures in the spotlight by the environmental pillar and the media in general. However, a much more worrying feature of the current debate is farmers turning on farmers.

Professor Gerry Boyle the former head of Teagasc recently got slated for suggesting that suckler beef farmers should consider dairy-beef as a feasible alternative. Of course, the reason is that dairy-beef is much more efficient from a greenhouse gas emissions point of view. The comments ignited a storm in the beef sector, in particular questioning Teagasc commitment to suckler beef with some saying that Teagasc has abandoned the beef sector in favour of the dairy sector. Nothing could be further from the truth, Teagasc has world-renowned beef and dairy research programmes. It's not Teagasc's fault that dairy profitability is significantly better than beef profitability, that's just the financial return from the market.

The reality is Professor Boyle is 100pc correct to make such a suggestion. Teagasc is an independent research and advisory body and he was simply giving advice. The fact that many suckler beef farmers and their advocates do not like his advice is not his problem, it is up to each individual suckler farmer to decide if they wish to consider the dairy-beef option or not. This debate is just an excuse to pitch beef farmers against dairy farmers, there are no winners on that path and it's certainly not good for unity in the industry.

The real battle is to convince the non-farming public and the environmental pillar that the agri-food industry can tackle the climate change challenge in this country. However, many people within the industry misread beef farmers in that they preach to them about their lack of profitability and that they should be motivated to make more money. The average beef suckler has 17 cows, rears calves to weanlings and has a full-time job. Economics is not the motivating factor. Contrast this with the average dairy farmer, who now milks almost 100 cows, is farming full-time and enjoying the most fruitful period of being a dairy farmer in the history of the State. The motivation here most certainly is economics.

## CAP Reform

Now let's look forward to motivating factors in the new EU CAP reform to commence in 2023. How will suckler beef and dairy farmers react to the proposed new eco schemes under Pillar 1 and agri-environmental schemes under Pillar 2? It is important to point out under EU rules all such schemes are meant to be



cost neutral to the participating farmer i.e. there is no scope to make profit from such schemes.

The 17-cow suckler farmer will first ask if there is a financial benefit to participating in the schemes. Assuming the answer is no, as highlighted, then this evokes a negative motivation to partake. The next question is how much work and time is involved as heavy time commitments are another demotivational factor. The glory days of generous payments in the old REPS Scheme with minimal work input are long gone. The EU has moved on but suckler beef farmers have copped-on and will question entering such schemes in future.

Contrast this with the mentality of the 100-cow dairy farmer, who is faced with the possibility of reduced stocking rates due to lower chemical nitrogen usage under the proposed new Nitrates Action Plan and with the possibility of a herd quota due to the methane emissions issue. The motivation here is to invest and participate in all such schemes to future-proof and develop the farm business.

The lesson here is that beef and dairy farmers are on two very different paths, there is no point comparing and contrasting, it's a fruitless exercise. Yes, there are good and not so good farmers in both enterprises but there is no point pitching them against one another.

## National Cow Retirement Scheme

My suggestion is that we should develop and offer a 'National Cow Retirement Scheme' which is attractive to both suckler beef and dairy farmers. A well-designed scheme will allow farmers considering retirement to exit in a dignified manner and it could also be used to encourage these suckler beef and dairy farmers to consider entering the dairy beef enterprise as suggested by Professor Boyle. Combine this with a clear path to trading carbon credits from these farms and a whole new chapter is opened for the future of beef farming.

Yes, we all know the value of the beef and dairy sectors to the national economy so let's get creative and develop enterprises, systems of farming and schemes suitable for the climate change challenge. I am confident science will deliver environmental sustainability in our farming systems but we must all pull together as the food chain is only as strong as the weakest link.

- *Michael Brady is an Agricultural Consultant and managing director at Brady Group: Agricultural Consultants & Land Agents. The Lodge, Lee Road, Cork. E mike@bradygroup.ie*

## EASIER ACCESS TO BER CERTS

IPAV CEO Pat Davitt along with Board members David McDonnell and Brian Dempsey recently met with the SEAI to discuss the possibility of easier access to BER certs for agents and valuers. Pat is delighted to confirm, after a very successful meeting, the SEAI will be making BER certs available either through the MPRN number, or the BER cert number. This will be a huge improvement to help streamline the process. Pat wishes to thank the SEAI for their help in this matter.



**You've helped us make history**

**This year, the Irish Farmers Journal reached its highest ever readership figure at 321,400 weekly print readers.**

**THANK YOU!**

**IRISH FARMERS JOURNAL**

Kantar Media's 2021 TGI Survey.

## IPAV'S SEVENTH EUROPEAN VALUATION CONFERENCE

'European Valuation Standards – A Practical Approach to Valuation in a Post Pandemic Economy' was the theme of this year's IPAV's Seventh Valuation Conference run in conjunction with TEGoVA, the Association of European Valuers Associations. An audience of more than 500 logged into the conference which again, due to Covid-19 restrictions, was held online.

Opening the Conference, the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage Darragh O'Brien TD congratulated IPAV on its 50th anniversary and welcomed its focus on high standards in the property industry across Europe.

"Quality valuation is a key component of a properly functioning property market and a focus on quality and high standards in the recent 9th edition of the Blue Book which provides standards that are relevant and easily comprehended to members and indeed to clients," he said. "As a government we believe that everybody should have access to good quality homes to purchase or rent at an affordable price."

Addressing the Conference, IPAV President Paul McCourtney told the conference that the six previous conferences had proved an excellent forum for discussing and debate on a wide variety of issues relevant to valuers in Ireland, the UK, Europe and the wider world.

"Like the previous conferences, I know that these discussions will greatly contribute to the store of knowledge around valuations and how we can all head towards a harmonisation of standards as much as possible, not just across Europe, but right across the global world," he said.

"At a conference such as this, I must mention Brexit, of course, as it has been mentioned at previous conferences," he said. "Unfortunately, we are still not out of the woods on this and it is hard to predict what the final outcome will be. Whatever scenario finally emerges, it is clear that in the property industry the Blue Book will become increasingly important throughout Europe."

The chairman of TEGoVA, Krzysztof Grzesik, told the conference that while he is a Polish national, he fully supports the primacy of EU law. European Valuation Standards were, he said fully rooted in EU Directives which are binding when applied directly across EU member states.

Speakers at the Valuation Conference included Professor Nick French, a recognised expert in the area of property valuation and appraisal; David Magor, CEO of the UK Institute of Revenues, Rating and Valuation; Sharon Magee, Director of Rating Policy in Land and Property Services; Martin O'Brien, South East Office Manager, Owens McCarthy Public Loss Assessors; Brendan McGing, a Registered and Chartered Building Surveyor; Dave Fitzgerald, Head of Financial Lines at KennCo Underwriting Ltd., John Le Tourneau, Treasurer of the Mainstreet Organisation of Realtors in the US; Gareth Williams, Director of CBRE Hotels; Tom Crosse, former IPAV President and Pat Davitt, CEO of IPAV. The Conference was moderated by Carol Tallon, CEO of communications agency Property District.

## IPAV'S YOUNG PROFESSIONAL NETWORK MEETS WITH MAINSTREET.



*At the meeting between IPAV and MAINSTREET were: (l-r) Pat Davitt, John Gormley, Brian Dempsey, Niamh Giffney, Paul McCourtney and John Le Tourneau.*

IPAV's YPN chairperson Niamh Giffney was delighted to take the opportunity to meet with Mainstreet on their recent visit to Ireland. This welcoming meeting was to prepare the ground for the first batch of American young people from the MAINSTREET Young Professionals Network visit to Ireland in early February 2022.

The first young members will come from Chicago as part of the agreement between Mainstreet and IPAV Young Professional members which will pave the way for the return trip of young Irish members to Chicago USA later in 2022.

John Le Tourneau, President of MAINSTREET, said an educational fund has been set up and agreed between the institutes to give a bursary to each member taking part in the scheme.

Paul McCourtney, IPAV President, said this is creating an ongoing experience where each young member will spend one week in an IPAV's member office creating an international experience and learning how property affairs are dealt with and carried out in the respective countries.

The IPAV President and YPN chair intend to visit Chicago in January to sign a Memorandum Of Understanding which will allow for overseas memberships of both organisations.

Commenting on this development Niamh Giffney said this is an eagerly awaited event for IPAV's YPN and she was delighted with the support from the IPAV board to fund it. This ongoing scheme will allow young members the freedom of travel to America, build international relationships and expand their business learning in the future, she added.



Former IPAV President Tom Crosse with panellists Dave Fitzgerald, Martin O'Brien and Brendan McGing.



IPAV CEO Pat Davitt with John Gormley, CEO of MAINSTREET Realtors.



IPAV President Paul McCartney presenting a copy of the history of the Institute to John Le Tourneau.



Conference Moderator Carol Tallon checks her notes with John Le Tourneau.



Former IPAV President Tom Crosse gets ready to address the Conference.



Conference moderator Carol Tallon with IPAV President Paul McCartney and CEO Pat Davitt.

## FOUR NEW MEMBERS ELECTED TO IPAV’S NATIONAL COUNCIL

IPAV’s AGM 2021 took place in the Radisson Blu St. Helen’s Hotel, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin on Saturday, 25 September. Some 35 members attended in person while a similar number attended virtually. Outgoing President Tom Crosse handed over the reins of office to Dublin’s Paul McCourtney. Former Junior Vice-President Gerry Coffey was elected Senior Vice-President and the new Junior Vice-President is Joanne Lavelle from Dundalk, Co. Louth.



### Four new members were elected to IPAV’s National Council at the AGM.

**Kay McGuire MIPAV MMCEPI** is a new member of National Council representing Connaught. A native of Co. Wexford, she moved to the West of Ireland when she was 19 and has lived there ever since. Along with her partner Cyril, Kay runs Galway Property services which specialises in block management and lettings across three counties, Galway, Mayo and Donegal.



**Lisa Kearney MIPAV REV MMCEPI** is a new member of National Council representing Munster. She is a company director and the head of Rooney’s Residential and New Home Sales department in Limerick. Lisa has successfully negotiated the sale of a number of high profile residential properties and new home developments in the greater Limerick region over the years and is also on the valuation panels of all major lending institutions. She also has an honours degree in Counselling and Psychotherapy and, a diploma in Property Law and a Certificate in Marketing from the Marketing Institute.



**Sonia Harvey MIPAV TRV MMCEPI** is a new member of National Council representing Ulster. A native of Monaghan town Sonia began her career in property in 1998 working along with Senator Robbie Gallagher who owned a thriving auctioneering business at the time. Joining the Sherry Fitzgerald Group c 2001 the business went from strength to strength with great support and training opportunities for the young auctioneer. Having qualified in 2005 with an IPAV accredited Diploma, she returned to Tallaght IT in 2013 to study for the TEGoVA standards for valuation course, again facilitated through IPAV. Since 2016 Sonia has been part of the management team at Sherry Fitzgerald in Monaghan town, with the proprietor Conor McManus.



**John Kennedy MIPAV TRV MMCEPI** is a new member of National Council representing Leinster. He is an equity partner in Casey Kennedy Estate Agents in Stillorgan and technology expert and chief executive of 4property.com. John has 20 years’ experience in property services in block, letting, property management and residential sales but also in technology. He has qualifications in engineering, sales, marketing & data analytics and in property services from TU Dublin and IPAV accredited course in 2015 and the TEGoVA Valuers course in 2016.

## NEW SENIOR AND JUNIOR VICE PRESIDENTS



IPAV’s new Senior Vice-President is Gerry Coffey, a well-known auctioneer, valuer and estate agent based in Williamstown, Co. Galway. In 2014 Gerry was certified as a Recognised European Valuer (REV) by TEGoVA. In June 2015, Gerry was elected to the IPAV National Council and has served on the Institute’s Rural Affairs committee. At the 2020 AGM he was elected Junior Vice-President. Gerry regularly contributes to both local and national radio programmes to discuss the property market in the West of Ireland with particular emphasis on farmland sales.



### New Junior Vice-President

IPAV’s new Junior Vice-President is Joanne Lavelle. Joanne is managing director of Michael Lavelle Estate Agents in Bridge Street, Dundalk, a well-known firm in the north-east. Joanne joined her father in the business 20 years ago having worked for a time in urban regeneration in London and in PR in Dublin. While working in Dublin she undertook IPAV’s Diploma course in IT Tallaght (now TU Dublin). Joanne is also a lecturer on the Property Service Authority’s CPD course for estate agents.

## OUTGOING PRESIDENT RECORDS SUCCESSES DESPITE COVID RESTRICTIONS

In his final remarks to members at the AGM, the outgoing President Tom Crosse said the past year had been a very difficult and challenging year for all IPAV members. Nobody in their wildest dreams could have imagined how a virus that originated in China would come to grip the world and cause thousands of deaths and illness across the globe. However, thanks to reasonably swift reaction by the Irish government, the HSE and other relevant agencies here, Ireland did suffer but nothing like the scale that many had predicted at the outset. On behalf of IPAV, he wished to express his sincere sympathy to all IPAV members who lost loved ones during the past eighteen months. The AGM, he said, was an occasion to remember them and all those who died from Covid-19.

The outgoing President said the pandemic caused the shutdown of much of Irish society for long periods and the property industry was, of course, included. Despite this, most auctioneers and estate agents managed to work from behind closed doors and were able to maintain a basic service for clients throughout. It was a tribute to the resilience of IPAV members that most had now re-emerged refreshed and revitalized and were back in full business mode again.

Throughout the pandemic, IPAV provided what support it could to members, notably by helping to negotiate the various protocols and keeping the voice of members heard when and where decisions were being made. He said he wished to thank the CEO Pat Davitt and the members of National Council for their support in this regard. He also wished to thank the very diligent staff at IPAV for their continued work for members. The Institute moved to support members when the coronavirus struck by halving the member subscription rates for 2020 and again for 2021, which was really appreciated by all.

### Growth in Membership

Despite the challenges, IPAV's membership had continued to grow, he said and he hoped this growth would continue. Confidence in the future of the auctioneering and estate agency profession was nowhere more obvious than in the huge number of applicants for the 2021/22 Certificate course. This year he said he was delighted to say there are a record 100 students in the First Year course. He wished to thank the Education Advisory Committee, its Convenor Paul Campbell and the staff at TU Dublin for their ongoing support and dedication.

In May 2021, the Institute also held a special EGM to update the Memorandum and Articles of Association. These changes which were approved by members, provided for a number of innovations, including greater gender balance on National Council as well as more rotation of its members.



*Outgoing IPAV President Tom Crosse addressing the AGM.*

The country's re-emergence from Covid-19 had seen a new emphasis on the shortage of housing supply and the need to significantly gear up to meet this ongoing challenge. IPAV continued to lobby government on this and other relevant issues of concern to members. For example, during the summer of 2021, an IPAV delegation led by the outgoing President, met the Minister for Housing, Local Government & Heritage, Darragh O'Brien. They also prepared a Pre-Budget submission for 2022.

IPAV's close association with TEGoVA, the European Group of Valuers Associations again continued over the past year. Despite the challenges, IPAV was delighted to be able to host the Sixth European Valuation Conference & Trade Exhibition virtually in 2020, and preparing for the 2021 Conference scheduled for Friday, November 5th.

Unfortunately, he said due to Covid-19 some events had to be cancelled over the past year but they did manage to get some over the line. YPN's Annual Golf Classic went ahead in both 2020 and 2021 when both events provided a generous contribution to charities. The Annual Lettings Day seminar went ahead on November 14th 2020 and the 2021 event was scheduled for Saturday, November 20th. IPAV's Annual Farm Report was launched by Minister of State Martin Heydon in January 2021 and an important survey of members was undertaken.

However, he said IPAV was unable to celebrate IPAV's 50th Anniversary in 2021 as they would have wished but they did mark it with the publication on August 27th of a history of the institute which was very well received indeed. He wished to thank author Andrew Hughes and everybody who contributed for their efforts into this book which records IPAV's highs and lows over 50 years.

On a personal note, Tom Crosse said it had been a great honour and a privilege for him to serve as IPAV President for the past year and he wish to thank all members for their support. In particular, he wished to thank his wife, Pearl and his family for their support, too.



*Pictured at the AGM were (l – r): Raymond Smith, Cavan; Joanne Lavelle, Dundalk; William Bradshaw, Stillorgan; Natasha Brown, Dublin 15 and John Kennedy, Stillorgan.*



*Senator Aidan Davitt addressing the AGM.*



*At the AGM were (l – r): Sonia Harvey, Monaghan Town; Raymond Smith, Cavan and Natasha Brown, Clonsilla, Dublin 15.*



*Ronan Crinion, Drumcondra and Alan Redmond, Swords at the IPAV BBQ.*



*IPAV staff Genevieve McGuirk and Valerie Mogerley at the AGM.*



*Senator Aidan Davitt and Pat Carroll, Kilmallock, Co Limerick at the AGM*



The new IPAV National Council meets following the 2021 AGM in the Radisson Blu St Helen's Hotel.



Senator John McGahon; IPAV CEO Pat Davitt and IPAV Junior Vice-President Joanne Lavelle.



Newly elected IPAV President Paul McCartney (second from left) with members of his family at the IPAV BBQ: Michael, Marion, Wendy, Garry, Jason and Craig McCartney.



Sunny and Chaimaa Fahim, Harolds Cross, Dublin 6W were at the IPAV BBQ in the Radisson Blu St Helen's Hotel.



Outgoing President Tom Crosse with Pearl Crosse, Paul Crosse and Laura Kennedy.



Outgoing IPAV President Tom Crosse receives a presentation from incoming President Paul McCartney.

## DUBLIN AGENT IS NEW IPAV PRESIDENT

The new President of IPAV is Dubliner Paul McCartney. Paul took over the reins of office from outgoing President Tom Crosse at the Institute's AGM which took place in the Radisson Blu St. Helen's Hotel, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin on Saturday, September 25th. Tim Ryan spoke to him.

### *Tell me about your childhood and early family years?*

I was born in Dublin and the eldest of three sons. I grew up in an area called Barnacullia which is up in the Dublin mountains. The mountain was my playground as a child growing up and I spent most of my spare time outside of school on the mountain hacking around on an old scrambler motorcycle along with our family dog "Lady". I suppose it is one of the reasons I'm so passionate about motorcycling as a pastime and hobby now.

### *Your father started the estate agency firm. Tell me a little about it.*

My father Michael started the business in the early 1970's. Things were a lot different back then and there was less competition. Dad had a much wider market in the early days which found him selling property right across the city and county. Dad worked in the business up until the early 90's before retiring.

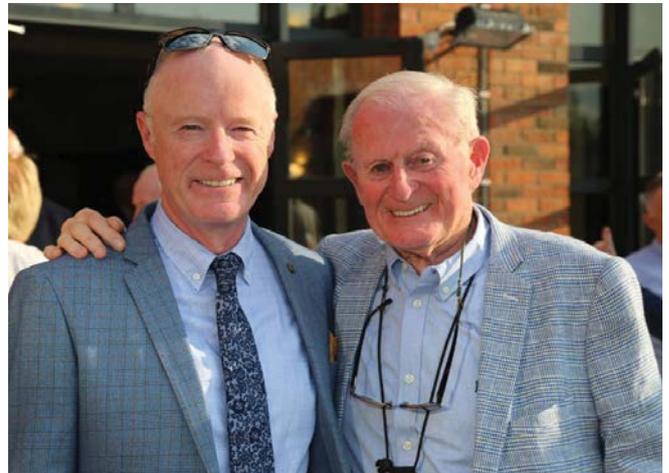
### *Tell me about your own career in the firm.*

My first memories of the business were in the early days when Dad started out and I would come along with him on the viewings on a Saturday morning and from there it got my interest. I started off in the business at 17 when I left school. Like any family business you have to start at the bottom and learning how to put up 'For Sale' signs was the start of it. I do remember buying my first suit which was a lot of money back then, but I always believed you had to look smart to give the right impression to clients. There are so many great memories that I have growing up and working with my father in the business, I could never have seen myself doing anything else.

During my childhood, I would have attended many IPAV events with my parents. Dad became involved in IPAV in the mid 70's and was voted onto Council I think the late 70's. I then became a member of IPAV in 1987 and was voted onto the National Council to represent Dublin and Leinster. By then I had taken over the business and ran it for more than 30 years before selling out to Beirne & Wise a few years ago. As part of that, they retained me as a consultant which I still am today.

### *What are your priorities as President of IPAV?*

Having worked in the industry for more than 35 years and been part of IPAV for that time, it is my intention, during my term of office, to continue to grow and increase our membership as we have been doing over the past years. My main objective as President will be to work for all members to the best of my ability at all times and to see how best we, as a council in IPAV,



*IPAV President Paul McCartney with his father Michael.*

can further assist IPAV members in developing new ideas for the younger generation of Auctioneers, Valuers and Estate Agents in the industry.

### *What are the main benefits of IPAV for members?*

When I started out in auctioneering the number of resources that were available to you was limited and technology was limited too. Now I would see IPAV as the only voice for Auctioneers, Valuers and Estate Agents in the country. IPAV offers so much now to its members, like actively promoting industry excellence and compliance through raising awareness, standards and professional advancement from Courses in IT Tallaght, CPD events, Fine Art courses, hosting seminars to develop skills and keeping them up-to-date with industry change and compliance. These courses are part-time which include Level 6 (120 ECTS) Higher Certificate in Real Estate (Valuation, Sale and Management). IPAV is the only professional Institute in Ireland which has awarding rights to administer the Recognised European Valuer (REV) status, as governed by TEGoVA. There is so much more to this organisation and I count myself lucky to have been a part of it for more than 35 years and it is a great honor to be President of it now. We have such a great CEO in Pat Davitt who has had the foresight and vision to take the Institute to where it is today. I would also like to mention Council and staff of IPAV as there is so much work that goes on behind the scenes that no one sees and this should be recognised.

### *Outside of estate agency, I know you have other interests including travel.*

Outside of the industry, I have a passion for traveling preferably on a motorcycle and I like to run and keep fit. Healthy body, healthy mind is what I have always said. I also like drawing, photography and fishing.

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# EAST MEATH ESTATE FIRM DEMONSTRATES GROWING ROLE OF WOMEN IN ESTATE AGENCY

BY TIM RYAN

A recent trend in the Irish estate agency profession is the increasing number of women now getting involved and carving out successful careers. This is happening at all levels in the profession, from student participation in education courses up to involvement in IPAV's National Council.

There are also several estate agency firms managed by women around the country, including DNG Wall Tuckey in Stamullen, Co. Meath run by Ailish Wall and Siobhain Tuckey. While based in the now Dublin commuter town of Stamullen, the office caters for a wide area extending to the towns of Balbriggan, Bellewstown, Julianstown, Bettystown, Laytown and Duleek.

The firm was set up originally by Ailish Wall who has many years of experience in estate agency. Originally from Santry in North Dublin she left school in 1998 unsure what career she wanted to pursue. She saw a PLC course advertised for auctioneering at Ballsbridge College and opted to try that. There she developed a keen interest in the profession. She recalls how she would travel from her home by bus to Dublin city centre each morning, often calling in for a chat to her uncle, Len Allen, who owned the well-known pub, the White Horse on Burgh Quay which was an early morning house, opening its doors at 7am. A regular early morning customer was the well-known Evening Press sports columnist Con Houlihan who would drop in for a drink having already dropped in his daily column – written in the middle of the night - to the Irish Press office next door.

After the course Ailish was offered a job with estate agent Kevin Flanagan in Malahide. In 2001 Ailish moved to Stamullen and recognised the growing residential market, hence set up her own estate agency in 2006. At the time Stamullen was just a small village but already there were signs of its growth and development. Nearby town Balbriggan was already booming and Ailish initially worked from home selling and renting out houses wherever she could find them. In 2007 she moved into her current office on the town's main street.

“I did very well there until the recession hit in 2008,” she recalls. “It was very hard then, there were no sales, just management and rentals which kept me afloat.” In 2008 she gave birth to her son Patrick and literally took him to work in the office every day. “There was no maternity leave for me and I just kept working as there no way I was giving up.”

## DNG franchise

In 2011 as the country was emerging from the recession, Ailish was approached by DNG and offered a franchise. She opted to take it and so DNG Ailish Wall came into being. Ailish opened a second office in Balbriggan. However, when she got the welcome news of the impending arrival of her daughter she decided to consolidate her businesses in the Stamullen office.



Ailish Wall (left) and Siobhain Tuckey

As the industry picked up again Ailish employed Siobhain Tuckey, who had just completed her Master's in real estate. While they are both “like chalk and cheese” they worked extremely well together to such an extent that two years later, in 2018, they became business partners. “It's different when you have somebody who has invested in the business and whom you can rely on rather than somebody who is just working for you,” says Ailish.

Ailish says estate agency is a tough business to be in on your own and she had been in such a situation for 12 years. “It was also nice to have a fresh pair of eyes from a newly qualified person,” says Ailish. In addition, Siobhain's wealth of blue chip corporate sales experience changed how DNG Wall Tuckey looked at governance and service. A native of the locality living in Stamullen with her husband and family, Siobhain is now living near Balbriggan. Siobhain remarks that she has children in school in three different counties, one in Dublin, one in Louth and one in Meath.

“Selling a house I regard as the easy part,” says Siobhain. “It's from that point of being sale agreed to handing over the keys that the work is required.” Both Siobhain and Ailish are very supportive of IPAV's proposed Seller's Legal Pack Bill which would see all relevant documentation made available prior to a sale rather than the current situation where pre-contract queries can hold it up for weeks on end. Siobhain instances a case of the recent sale of an apartment and just when the sale was about to close, the purchaser's solicitor suddenly requested a map from an architect showing which block the apartment was in, thereby delaying closure for a number of weeks. Such items should clearly be dealt with much earlier in the process, she says. Transparency and clarity over the whole area are badly needed, both Ailish and Siobhain agree. And communication is key. Working with many of the female principles in other local DNG Offices including Skerries, Ashbourne and Navan has allowed Ailish and Siobhain to collaborate for the added benefit of all their clients. The office prides itself on its service delivery and point to their high rating on Google and other feedback platforms.

## Shortage of properties

The current market in Stamullen, which now has a population of 4,000, and the suburban towns around north Dublin and east Meath is vibrant. The shortage of properties is a constant problem but there is a lot of building now underway. In recent weeks,

the market has slowed to some extent with offers not coming in at the same pace as they were in mid-summer. Many people who can work from home, part-time or full-time, are delighted to be able to buy a house at a much lower price in Stamullen and surrounding areas than in the city. For commuters, there are regular trains from nearby Gormanstown and Balbriggan as well as bus services. A car journey to Swords or Dublin airport takes about 20 minutes and a train journey to Connolly station takes 40 minutes.

Current prices for a three-bed semi range from €280,000 to €300,000. Houses in a newly built estate in the town are priced at €330,000 to €340,000 and are sold out. There are a small number of corporate businesses, centred largely around the City North Hotel, which provide employment as well as the well-known Clarke's Fresh Fruit farm. In addition, the Talbot Group which provides services for adults with disabilities has several houses in the area which give employment locally.

The current Covid-19 restrictions to individual viewings is a cause of great concern as it can delay people's appointments considerably leading to frustration on the part of the buyer.

Both Ailish and Siobhain are members of IPAV for many years and find the support provided very practical and relevant. They also find the collegiality and willingness to offer advice and mutual support of great help. "We are all in the same boat and can share the same problems without any inhibitions," says Ailish.

Outside of work, both Ailish and Siobhain are keen sports enthusiasts, and this is demonstrated in their sponsorship of numerous St Patricks' GAA teams, which comprises Stamullen and nearby Julianstown. In addition, they have sponsored Balbriggan and Stamullen Football club, Star of the Sea Athletics Club along with Balbriggan Cricket Club. They are avid believers

in giving back to the local community. Each year without fail they have given numerous female students from transition year in local school's work experience in an effort to demonstrate the role of women in the real estate industry.

Recently DNG Wall Tuckey have further extended their female footprint by employing a Stamullen based lady Justyna Becella-Sobiech in the role of office manager. Justyna brings a wealth of customer experience which enhances the professional services Ailish and Siobhain work diligently to provide. Justyna has hit the ground running and is making a huge impact on the DNG Wall Tuckey business.

Facing into 2022 and another new year, Ailish and Siobhain along with Justyna are at the cutting edge of their profession and are well prepared and equipped for the challenges ahead.



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## BUDGET 2022 SUMMARY

The total budgetary package is €4.7 billion. This is split between expenditure measures worth €4.2 billion and tax measures worth €½ billion, including revenue raising measures of approximately €230 million.

### Housing

- 11,820 new social homes will be delivered through build, acquisition and leasing programmes. 9,000 of these will be new build homes
- 11,000 grants to adapt the homes of older people and people with a disability
- 14,800 new households to have their housing needs met under the Housing Assistance Payment and Rental Accommodation Scheme, in addition to supporting almost 82,000 existing tenancies under these schemes
- €50 million in Exchequer funding next year to commence the Croí Cónaithe fund to help service sites and refurbish properties in towns and villages and to increase owner occupier apartment development in city centres
- €1.6 billion in water services next year, much of which will help to unlock further housing supply
- €202 million fund for people to improve the energy efficiency of their homes in 2022
- €18 million for the delivery of Traveller accommodation

### Help to Buy Scheme

- The Help -To- Buy scheme is being continued at the current rates for 2022. A full review will take place next year

### Commercial Rates:

- €60 million for the extension of commercial rates waive on targeted basis, from 2021 funding

### Zoned Land Tax

- A Zoned Land Tax will be introduced to encourage the use of land for building homes. It will have a two-year lead-in time for land zoned before January 2022 and a three-year lead in time for land zoned after January 2022
- The tax will be based on the market value of the land and at the outset will be 3 per cent. It replaces the Vacant Site levy.
- The tax will operate on a self-assessment basis, will be administered by the Revenue Commissioners and will replace the vacant site levy when it comes into operation.

### Pre-letting expenses for landlords

- Tax relief for pre-letting expenses for landlords will be extended for a further three years

### Covid 19

- A contingency fund amounting to €4 billion will be created
- The Employment Wage Subsidy Scheme (EWSS) will remain in place in a graduated form until the 30th of April 2022
- No change to EWSS for the months of October and November
- Businesses availing of the EWSS on the 31st of December 2021 will continue to be supported until the 30th of April 2022
- Across December, January and February, a two-rate structure of €151.50 and €203 will apply
- For March and April 2022, the final two months of the scheme, a flat rate subsidy of €100 will be put in place. The reduced rate of Employers' PRSI will no longer apply for these two months
- The scheme will close to new employers from the 1st of January 2022

### Remote Working

- An income tax deduction amounting to 30 per cent of the cost of vouched expenses for heat, electricity and broadband in respect of those incurred while working from home, which will be formalised in legislation through the Finance Bill

### Income Tax

- An increase in the standard rate band by €1,500
- An increase in each of the personal tax credit, employee tax credit and earned income credit by €50
- An increase the national minimum wage by 30 cent to €10.50 per hour
- The ceiling of the second USC rate band will be increased from €20,687 to €21,295

### Agriculture

- General stock relief will continue to the end of 2024
- Stock relief for Young Trained Farmers and Farm Partnerships, and the Young Trained Farmer stamp duty relief will continue to the end of 2022

### Climate Measures

- Carbon tax will rise by €7.50 per tonne to €41
- Petrol and diesel prices increased from midnight on Budget Day. A 60 litre tank of petrol costs an extra €1.28 and a similar tank of diesel costs an extra €1.48
- €5,000 relief for Battery Electric Vehicles until 2023

## IPAV REGRETS LACK OF EQUAL TAX TREATMENT FOR PRIVATE LANDLORDS

IPAV welcomed the extension of the Help-to-buy scheme in Budget 2022 into next year but said it was a pity it was not being further extended to second-hand homes, which would have encouraged more movement in the market, particularly where those who bought at the top of the market may now have a different housing need.

IPAV CEO Pat Davitt also welcomed the Zoned Land Tax to be introduced to encourage the use of land for building homes. However, he said, unfortunately, it is going to take some time to see the impact given that it will have a two-year lead-in time for land zoned before January 2022 and a three-year lead in time for land zoned after January 2022

He said the extension of relief for pre-letting expenses for landlords for another three years was very positive, as was the €85 million for retrofitting and the €65 million for housing adaptation grants.

“It is disappointing that the Budget does not have any measures to equalise the tax treatment of private landlords with that of commercial landlords, with private landlords leaving the market at a rate of two out for every one that enters. It is because of the onerous and unfair tax treatment of such landlords by comparison with commercial landlords that they are leaving, despite record high rents. “Equalisation of tax treatment would encourage long-term more secure rentals for tenants.”



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## FIRST MEETING OF CROSS-PARTY OIREACHTAS COMMITTEE



Senator John McGahon

A new informal Dáil cross-party Oireachtas Committee proposed by IPAV has been set up following approval by Ceann Comhairle, Seán Ó Fearghail and it held its first meeting on Wednesday, 22 September.

The informal Committee on Property Market Reform brought together TDs and Senators with representatives of IPAV. IPAV's Committee members intend to use this forum to help inform Oireachtas

members and debate issues on the property market and to assist in the development of new policy solutions to the challenges currently being encountered.

Senator John McGahon has been appointed Chairperson. Speaking at the first meeting he said: "The property market is fraught with impediments to delivering sustainability and affordability, which of course the Government's Housing for All Plan is aimed at tackling. I am confident that this Committee can contribute in no small way to helping achieve the aims of that plan through gaining insights from all elements of the market, and including perhaps some voices that have not been aired heretofore."

He said the Committee will meet on a quarterly basis and invite Government bodies, companies or groups to discuss

key themes and issues, help to relieve blockages and advance policy objectives pertaining to property market reform such as market behaviours, the introduction of a Sellers' Legal Pack, recalibrating commercial units and examining the number of vacant homes to help ease market pressure and dysfunction, digitisation of the property services sector and the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and public health restrictions on the property market.

The work of the Committee will be focused on bringing forward pragmatic, well informed solutions while influencing key decision-makers on IPAV's policy objectives that will in turn deliver a property market that is equitable, sustainable and modern.

Welcoming the move IPAV's Chief Executive Pat Davitt said: "This initiative will enable Oireachtas members' gain access to expert opinion on matters concerning the housing crisis and to acquire cutting edge insights from property market professionals and others.

"This open, cross-party dialogue will no doubt highlight the breadth of policy areas impacting the property market and bring a range of expertise to a wider political audience. For our part we are very much looking forward to contributing to the work of the Committee," he said.

## IN THE DÁIL

Arising from the first meeting of the Cross Party Oireachtas Committee a number of Parliamentary Questions were raised.

### Conversion of commercial premises

*Deputy Noel Greally (Ind. Galway West) asked the Minister for Finance if he will introduce a tax incentivisation scheme that facilitates owners and purchasers of town centre commercial buildings convert them into residential properties.*

Minister for Finance: The Housing for All Strategy was developed in consultation with all relevant Government Departments, including my own. The measures set out in the strategy, together with the associated timeframes for delivery, represent the current actions for priority attention in order to increase the supply of residential property.

Having said this, the Deputy will be aware of the Living City Initiative (LCI). The LCI is specifically aimed at the regeneration of the historic inner cities of Dublin, Cork, Galway, Kilkenny, Limerick and Waterford. The scheme provides income or corporation tax relief for qualifying expenditure incurred in refurbishing/converting of qualifying buildings, including for residential purposes, which are located within pre-determined 'Special Regeneration Areas' (SRAs).

There are three types of relief available:

- **Owner-occupier residential relief;**
- **Rented residential relief; and,**
- **Commercial/Retail relief.**

In 2016 officials from my Department reviewed the measure in consultation with the relevant councils and the then Department of Arts, Heritage, Regional, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs. On foot of that review, a number of changes were brought forward in Budget 2017 in order to make the initiative more attractive and effective. The principal change extended the residential element of the scheme to landlords, who may now claim the relief by way of accelerated capital allowances for the conversion and refurbishment of property, which was built prior to 1915, where such property is to be used for residential purposes.

In relation to property-based reliefs more generally, taxation is only one of the policy levers available to the Government through which to boost overall housing supply. In line with my Department's Tax Expenditure Guidelines, consideration of whether a tax measure is the most appropriate policy tool for a given purpose is required. The presumption should be that non-tax measures should be considered before the use of a tax-based measure. The primary responsibility for direct expenditure-based policy in this area lies with the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Finally, Ireland's past experience with tax incentives in this sector strongly suggests the need for a cautionary stance.

## Stamp Duty

*Deputy Noel Grealish (Ind., Galway West) asked the Minister for Finance if he will introduce a two-tier stamp duty rate for land with a reduced rate applying to active farmers who work the land directly in order to increase output and production; and if he will make a statement on the matter.*

Minister for Finance: The current stamp duty rate for non-residential property, which includes agricultural land, is 7.5%. Farming is first and foremost a business, and indeed section 655 of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 states “For the purposes of the Tax Acts, farming shall be treated as the carrying on of a trade or, as the case may be, of part of a trade, and the profits or gains of farming shall be charged to tax under Case I of Schedule D.” It is therefore appropriate for acquisitions of farmland to be subject, in the normal course of events, to the rate of stamp duty applicable to other non-residential property.

However, in respect of agricultural land, there are a range of generous and targeted reliefs from stamp duty, specific to that type of property, which remove in full or reduce the rate of stamp duty payable on the acquisition of farmland, currently available. These include the young trained farmer stamp duty relief, consanguinity relief and farm consolidation relief. These reliefs are kept under regular review by my department, and are renewed, updated and added to in line with Government policy and prevailing circumstances, when necessary. I have no plans to introduce a special stamp duty rate for active farmers or for agricultural land.

## Holiday Homes

*Deputy Noel Grealish (Ind. Galway West) asked the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage if he would temporarily suspend the limitations of usage on holiday homes in order to permit prospective tenants to reside in them in order to alleviate the housing crisis.*

Minister for Finance: Under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, as amended (the Act), all development, unless specifically exempted under the Act or associated Regulations, requires planning permission.

In some cases, when the initial planning permission for a holiday home is sought, planning authorities have additionally specified by way of planning condition (such as an occupancy clause) that such holiday homes cannot be used for permanent residential purposes. It is considered that a change of use of a holiday home to a place of permanent residence would be a material change of use requiring planning permission. The carrying out of a material change of use from holiday home to a place of permanent residence without obtaining planning permission could be considered unauthorised development and subject to enforcement proceedings by the relevant planning authority under planning legislation.

If the owner of a holiday home wishes for the premises to be used as place of permanent residence, then they may lodge a planning application to the relevant planning authority for a change of use from holiday home to residential use. It is a matter for the planning authority to decide such applications on a case by case basis. When considering an application for planning permission for residential development or change of use, the planning authority is required to consider the local housing needs requirements policy as set out in the authority’s Development Plan.

It should be noted that holiday homes are often located in more remote areas and/or may be on land which is specially zoned for such development in the Development Plan and/or Local Area Plan, e.g. a “resort” zoning, and which therefore may not be suitable for permanent residential development. Different design layouts and standards may also be applied to holiday homes than to permanent residential development and the planning authority’s policies on rural housing may also apply differently to holiday homes than to permanent residential development, all of which the planning authority would have to consider when making a decision on a change of use application. Consequently, a proposal to change a holiday home to permanent residential housing could be found to be contrary to the principles of proper planning and sustainable development of the area in question.

I have no plans to amend the existing provisions in this regard at this point in time.

## Help-To-Buy Scheme

*Deputy Richard Boyd Barrett (PBP, Dún Laoghaire) asked the Minister for Finance if he has plans to extend the Help -To-Buy scheme to include second-hand homes.*

Minister Paschal Donohoe: Help-to-Buy (HTB) is a scheme to assist first-time purchasers with the deposit they need to buy or build a new house or apartment. The incentive gives a refund of Income Tax and Deposit Interest Retention Tax paid in the State over the previous four years, subject to limits outlined in the legislation. Section 477C of the Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 outlines the definitions and conditions that apply to the scheme. Another main aim of the policy underpinning the design of scheme is to help encourage the building of additional new properties.

With regard to the Deputy’s question about extending the scheme to second-hand properties, HTB is specifically designed to encourage an increase in demand for new build homes in order to encourage the construction of an additional supply of such properties. A move to include second-hand properties within the scope of the relief might not improve its effectiveness; on the contrary, it could serve to dilute the incentive effect of the measure in terms of encouraging additional supply. I can confirm, therefore, that I have no plans at present in this regard.



## COST OF RETROFITTING HOMES FAR TOO PROHIBITIVE FOR MOST

BY TOMMY BARKER, PROPERTY EDITOR, IRISH EXAMINER

If my current home were a motor car, it would be the equivalent of a decade's old three-litre petrol-guzzling model, with a road tax rate of €1,800 per annum – and, not particularly a classic. Good luck trying to sell a car like that, sez you, not to mind fuelling it. No matter how lovely the trim, the growl of the exhaust, the walnut dash and, maybe even the prestige badge on the bonnet, we have pretty much arrived at a time when cars like that are worth more dead than alive.

We might whip out the leather seats, a bit like furniture designer Ron Arad did in 1981 with seats from a tank-like Rover 2000/P6. Arad mounted second-hand Rover P6 seats on tubular steel and created a post-modernist furniture classic, one which even featured on the set of the BBC's Top Gear. Early and original Ron Arad examples can sell for thousands of pounds, or euros, and in many cases now such single seats can fetch more than working and legal examples of the very same old Rovers they were cannibalised from sell for.

Other than rare bits of old car kit like that, most older motors have fetched up on the scrap heap. If rust didn't get them, road tax, running costs and environmental disapproval most certainly sounded their death knell, driving them off the roads, bar the odd Classic Car event or enthusiast's single marque run-out. You'll know when one is near you, because you'll smell the fumes....or spot the AA van.

Looks like the same sort of end-of-the-road thing will be happening to this country's older housing stock too. GEE WHIZZ! We are now utterly familiar with how increasingly routinely house buyers will check the BER rating of a property for sale.

Close on one million BER assessments now have been carried out on Irish houses since these assessments were first introduced, either those built and sold since '07, when transacted, or when owners are applying for SEAI grants for upgrades. Some 80% of Irish homes assessed to date for a BER got a C, or a D rating or worse. Mine, unfortunately, got a G.

I had submitted to the indignity of the BER assessment as part of a process (part journalistic, part curiosity, and partly in hope of a quick fix) to find out how my early 1900s-built home in the countryside (I'm only guessing its age) would respond to a deep retrofit programme, to bring it to a certified B1 BER, make it consistently comfortable, healthy, use a lot less fuel, and emit less carbon. It was done just weeks before the topic of deep retrofits on Irish homes jumped up the national news agenda as COP26 got into gear in Scotland and just before the costs of tackling the global climate crisis really hit home, literally and hit the pockets too.

### Sheer sale of costs

When the sheer scale of costs involved tumbled across the news agenda, I was well-prepped if not partially prepared for the scale



and sort of figures involved. But, given the costs I would face, pretty much powerless to act on the 18-page report I had got from Electricity Ireland Superhomes, one of a number of the country's burgeoning, and vitally necessary, 'One Stop Shops.' Superwarm are scaling up from 100 deep retrofits done in 2021 to an anticipated 650 by 2023; the Government's own targets are on another level again, aiming to do deep retrofits to 35,000 Irish homes a year from 2023 and to hit a whopping 500,000 homes to a B2 or higher grade by 2030.

Even assuming that enough bodies can be found to do all this work in a skills-shortage construction sector, the Government's retrofitting plan has been costed at €25-€23 billion.

My own contribution to the tens of billions of euros to be spent by the State and citizens came to €65,000...Gulp, and that was for a modest-sized 108 sq meter stone-built house I had worked on piece-meal and very much on a DIY budget for over 15 years. It is coastal and charming: I moved to live in it full-time in the past two years, often since describing it in shorthand as "old, and cold" and even that's a kindness.

Of that €65,000 estimate via Superhomes' energy engineer Shaun Finn's spirit-sapping, cold-reality 18-page report, I would get back €14,000 in SEAI grants by the time I got air-tightness and insulation levels ready for an energy efficient heat pump and should hit a B1 BER. There was a proviso that the estimate could vary by 15%, up or down. Right, and without being too cynical, it is hardly likely to go down 15%. A further galling fact was that as I had slabbed most of the walls with 50mm insulation, but had no receipts or immediately verifiable/visible proof of the work. It would all have to come back out again to be done correctly, to 100mm rigid insulation and more approved affixing/breathing standards.

DEEP BREATH! Ain't going to be doing it all anytime soon, that's for sure. The net cost, even after grants, equates to 20+years of home energy bills, at current energy rates at least, and in that I reckon I'm with the majority of the c 500,000 other Irish homeowners the Government needs to persuade to do the deep dives and costly retrofits.

By way of perspective, Superhomes (electricirelandsuperhomes.ie) says in their experience costs generally range from €25,000 for a modest home built after 2000, to over €70,000, and its average retrofit is €56,000 gross, or €37,000 net of grants. Department of Environment estimates put the cost of deep retrofits to a B2 or B1 standards as ranging from €14,000 to €66,000, yet my own 1,100

sq ft G-rated gaff which already has double glazing, part-drylining and old spec attic insulation (100-200mm rockwool) was coming in at the very upper end of that price range. COP OUT! You'd have to worry about the whole do-ability, wouldn't you?

## Despair

Media reports during COP26 indicated many other Irish householders in similar despair at the costs, even those with the best climate action intentions, with payback on energy bills possibly taking 20- or more years to return a financial dividend. It's just a fact that very many owners of Ireland's older houses will be dead, or on their last legs by the time the financial scales balance out in their pockets' favour. Even economists like Prof John FitzGerald of ESRI fame and who is former chair of the National Expert Advisory Council on Climate Change has publicly admitted the costs vs the returns to the average home-owner "don't stack up." But....many of those laggards if persuaded to pay out the tens of thousands to get a B-grade BER may be warmer and healthier into their dotage, at least and the value of their homes will surely increase too if a B1 or B2 BER can be pinned to their sales brochures and website listings.

The Government has said it is going to prioritise social homes in its own drive and retrofit spend, with at least €5bn being allocated from future carbon taxes and with an Exchequer top-up: that's fair enough in many respects, as the less-well off and those at risk of fuel poverty get necessary upgrades.

But, there's still the notional 'squeezed middle' who'll be expected to carry their own can to a very large extent, unless and until the financial incentives get more generously addressed, grants are stepped up, or the 13.5% VAT on proven and sustainable retrofits

can be claimed back. While obviously desirable, getting to a B2 or better standard isn't the only option, though it's sort of a gold standard: improving insulation and air-tightness is a start, at least. Of the 18,500 Irish homes which did retrofits in 2020 traced by the SEAI, just 4,000 got into the B2 or better BER league.

As COP26 kicked off this November, a poll carried out by RTE's Claire Byrne Live showed very clearly the balancing act that has to be carried out to get a sufficient number of Ireland's homes (500,000 to be done by 2030) to sustainable low-energy/low carbon emission usage standards. If the net cost to householders to hit a B BER on their own homes was going to be €26,000, just 18% said they'd fork out to do it. But, if the cost falls to €11,000, all of a sudden over three times as many people would go for it, some 61% willing to pony up for home comforts and some positive impact on the plant's prospects of not overheating. €11,000 'just?' That might be do-able with some Covid-19 savings under the mattress, or via a Credit Union loan, while the Government is set to develop a Retrofit Loan Guarantee scheme in the coming months, among other incentives, tax-based and otherwise.

IPAV members as expert valuers and professional daily participants in the homes market, above all else, know the costs see-saw between costs and returns, both short and long-term in the housing market, among savvy buyers. And, to paraphrase an old saw of an anecdotal kind, one attributed to Winston Churchill? Churchill asked a woman if she'd sleep with him for millions of pounds and wasn't discouraged in his questioning. But, he then gets a rebuttal when he drops the price offer to a fiver. "What kind of woman do you take me for?" he was indignantly asked, to which he is said to have replied "Madam we have established what kind of woman you are. Now, we are haggling about the price."

(PS For Sale, Rover P6 1973. No NCT. No seats. Cheap.)



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## AGM OF IPAV'S YOUNG PROFESSIONALS NETWORK (YPN)

IPAV's Young Professionals Network (YPN) held their AGM immediately after the IPAV AGM on Saturday, 25 September. The meeting reviewed last year's activities and looked forward to the year ahead. The theme for the coming year is 'Growth' and the YPN are looking to engage with many more Young Professionals in the property sector. Chair Niamh Giffney wants to encourage the students who have graduated to connect with the YPN and to build their network with like-minded young professionals. She also urges employers to support and encourage their staff to get involved in the YPN.

Officers elected for the coming year were: Chair: Niamh Giffney; Vice-Chair: Natasha Brown; Treasurer: William Bradshaw and Secretary: Eoghan Murray.

A review of the year was conducted and the first in person event of the year for the YPN was their 5th annual Golf Classic on 13th August at Headfort Golf Club in Kells Co. Meath. It was a very successful event which was jointly sponsored by PINERGY and OFFR. In all, 35 teams teed off on the day, making it the largest

attendance to date. Two nominated charities The Alzheimer's Society and Breakthrough Cancer research received donation from the funds raised on the day. A presentation has been made to both charities who were very grateful for the donations.

Looking forward to the coming year, YPN have secured a fund to organise an educational exchange program in partnership with Mainstreet Relators in Chicago. This is an exciting opportunity for young professionals to apply for a bursary to travel and engage with Real Estate Agents in Chicago.

The IPAV YPN Novice Rostrum Auctioneer Competition will return on the 22nd February 2022 to Tattersalls Ratoath Co. Meath. The Young Professionals Network will bring the New Year competition to the next level with LSL Auctions live broadcasting and bidding.

The Young Professionals Network continues to grow from strength to strength and the upcoming events and programmes are open to all IPAV members to attend.



YPN chair Niamh Giffney with IPAV CEO Pat Davitt at the YPN AGM in the Radisson Blu St Helen's Hotel.



Presentation of a cheque following the YPN Golf outing were (l - r): Tom Crosse, outgoing IPAV President; Niamh Giffney, Chair, YPN; Eileen representing Breakthrough Cancer Research; Brian McCarthy, YPN and Paul McCourtney, incoming IPAV President.



Pictured at the YPN AGM were (back row l - r): Brian McCarthy, John Kennedy, Natasha Brown, Sonia Harvey, William Bradshaw, David McDonnell, Liam Quain (front row l - r): Kay McGuire, Raymond Smith, Ailish Wall, Paul McCourtney, Niamh Giffney, Gerry Coffey, Pat Davitt, Brian Dempsey.



Niamh Giffney, Chairperson IPAV YPN presenting a cheque, the proceeds from the YPN golf classic to the Meath Alzheimer's Society. (L - R): Alice Furey Treasurer, Bernie O'Reilly, Annemarie Russell Chairperson Meath Alzheimer's Society and Niamh Giffney Chairperson IPAV YPN.

## FIRST REAL ESTATE GRADUATION FROM TU SHANNON

On Wednesday, 27th October 2021, the newly formed Technological University of the Shannon (TUS) held its first graduation at its Athlone Campus. The Technological University of the Shannon is home to over 14,000 students across six campuses in Athlone, Moylish, Limerick School of Art and Design, Thurles, Clonmel and Ennis. At the heart of each campus is a dynamic, closeknit community of learners. Transcending geography, TUS is Ireland's first cross-regional university.

The graduation ceremony for the Faculty of Continuing, Professional Online and Distance Learning was attended by the students of the Faculty's 2020/2021 academic year's programmes and were joined by staff, family and friends in celebrating their graduation.

Each graduate received their graduation parchment from Professor Vincent Cunnane, President of TUS.

The graduation ceremony included graduates from the Certificate in Real Estate Administration programme which is run in conjunction with the IPAV. Students of this year long, part time and online programme graduated with a Level 6 certificate. The objective of the Certificate in Real Estate Administration programme is to give the appropriate skills to individuals who are working in or those intending to work in administration in real estate offices, and the knowledge and competencies required to support the property professional and their clients in a professional and competent manner.



Ms Eliosha Lydon, a graduate of the Certificate in Real Estate Administration programme won the Student of the Year for the Faculty of Continuing, Professional, Online and Distance Learning. This prestigious award is given to the student who achieves the highest overall marks in the Faculty across all of its programmes during the academic year. Ms Eliosha Lydon is currently a property manager of mixed-use commercial units in Galway city.

The photograph shows Ms Eliosha Lydon receiving the Faculty of Continuing, Professional Online and Distance Learning Student of the Year 2020/2021 Award from Professor Vincent Cunnane, President of The Technological University of the Shannon during the graduation ceremony.

## OVER 300 LOG INTO THE VIRTUAL LETTINGS AND RESIDENTIAL CONFERENCE



*IPAV President Paul McCartney with Lettings Day co-ordinator Tim Ryan.*

Over 300 IPAV members and estate agents participated in the Annual Lettings and Residential Conference which was held virtually on Saturday, 20 November.

Following welcoming remarks by IPAV CEO Pat Davitt, IPAV President Paul McCartney delivered the opening address. The Seminar presentations by John Leahy on behalf of the Residential Tenancies Board; Paula O'Reilly, Assistant Principal, Department of Housing, Local Government & Heritage; Jean O'Grady from the HAP Shared Services Centre, Limerick; Colm Smyth, former Principal Officer, Environmental Section, Dublin City Council; Fionnuala Murphy, Orpen Franks Solicitors; Shay O'Brien, Tax Consultant and David Rouse from the Housing Agency.

The Seminar was moderated by Tim Ryan. IPAV staff members Genevieve McGuirk, Val Mogerley and Jakub Polanski co-ordinated the Zoom technology which ran very smoothly. All sessions had a Question and Answer section via the Zoom Q & A facility.



## GREAT TO BE BACK IN THE CLASSROOMS

BY FRANK QUINN, LECTURER IN PROPERTY VALUATION,  
BLACKROCK FURTHER EDUCATION INSTITUTE

Readers of this column will know that the last eighteen months has been a difficult time for third level education. Covid has resulted in very few face-to-face classes with online education the solution. We have Zoomed, Teamsed and Moodled our way to provide our courses to students who already have experienced the online education system in their secondary schools.

We were pleasantly surprised with how well the online system had worked. Educators, many of whom had very little serious knowledge of technology, have learned more IT in eighteen months than the previous eighteen years. I can say this from personal experience as someone who has been slow to embrace new technology, that it has been a transformative time for teachers and students alike.

Classes have been held online with added notes put up on colleges Moodle systems. For those non-techies, Moodle is an online college system where lecturers can upload notes, assignments and exams for students to easily access. Don't be worried if you have never heard of a Moodle system as a few years ago many in education hadn't either. But its use has resulted in efficiencies of time and effort where the physical paper handout has been replaced by a permanent online copy for students to read at their leisure.

Assignments have been uploaded online by students resulting in a massive reduction in paper waste. Thirty students in a class producing ten-page Assignments three times a year use nine hundred pages. Now multiply that by the number of classes in a college it gets into tens of thousands of pages for every college in the country. Now every Assignment in our college in Blackrock is uploaded and corrected online.

The environment wins as does the student who doesn't physically have to hand in the Assignment and the lecturer wins by being able to correct the work in an easier way with a digital record of the students mark. Online classes have been made possible with Teams and Zoom allowing lecturers to present information to students from a safe distance. It was also possible to record the classes to allow students to go back over the material covered at their own pace and redo examples and exercises until they understand them. Without a doubt the online experience of education has been a great success and worked better than many of us had thought.

### Trepidation

And so, it was with a little trepidation that normal physical classes resumed in September. Many of us lecturers were a combination of nervousness over the virus while excited at the idea of being able to interact with students in a more normal way. That's to say if anything can be considered normal in these strange times. We also had students, mainly mature ones, who pulled out of courses when they found out there was to be no online classes this year.

Armed with a mask and a whiteboard marker, we finally reclaimed our classrooms for the first time since March 2020. At the time, we thought we may be back in under a month! And how has the experience of the last few months been since the return? It's been fantastic and great to be back interacting with students on a face to face basis, picking up on non-verbal clues that can tell us whether they understand the material or not.

Whereas online classes are very much a one-way system of communication, the physical classroom allows for students to participate in a much more meaningful way. Instead of the lecturer's voice dominating the discussion we have students taking their turn to outline their knowledge and experience. This gives us educators a chance to gauge where the knowledge levels are and plan our teaching accordingly.

It also gives us a chance to discuss with students how they are enjoying the course, or in some cases, how they may not be. Our college has already been able to transfer some students to alternative courses where they discovered after a week of classes that what they had enrolled on wasn't for them. This is a normal part of college life and it occurs when students are able to approach staff to discuss their issues.

Other advantages of physical classes are the fun interactions that take place between people on a daily place. Sometimes we forget how enjoyable and humorous social interaction can be. The sort of interaction that all of us have missed out on over the last while. The first week back in our staff office was like lost people shipwrecked on a desert island finding each other again after a long absence.

I know the students are enjoying learning with their peers and the shared learning opportunities that can take place. As much as online classes were good, the physical classes are better and hopefully are here to stay.



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